

# Re: Esperanto and Interlingua

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2007-03/msg00913.html>

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- *From:* Ruud Harmsen <realemailonsite@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Mon, 12 Mar 2007 19:50:59 +0100
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12 Mar 2007 08:32:55 -0700: "Peter T. Daniels"  
<grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx>; in sci.lang:

Ruud Harmsen wrote:

Mon, 12 Mar 2007 13:14:07 +0100: Ruud Harmsen  
<realemailonsite@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>; in sci.lang:

12 Mar 2007 04:49:39 -0700: "Peter T. Daniels"  
<grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx>; in sci.lang:

Is malgranda = small also  
'dangerous, evil'?

If the language has no way of distinguishing  
between "small" and "not  
big," then it's a pretty piss-poor language.

Malgranda doesn't mean "not big" but "the contrary of big",  
i.e.  
small. Cf. malvarma = cold.

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small," then it's a pretty piss-poor language.

big = granda

not small = nemalgranda.

Or in a sentence: "it is not small" = "ghi ne estas malgranda". No  
problem at all.

When translating, every translator encounters ways of expressing  
things that are very hard to translate, in any language combination.

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This is just as true between natural languages (even if they are closely related \*) as in a combination in which Esperanto is involved. It is quite easy to coin Esperantisms that cannot be expressed in other languages with the same conciseness.

\*) Example: German has Bereich and Dutch has bereik. The meanings are similar, yet German occurrences of Bereich are often very hard to translate into Dutch. The word is often "translated away", for lack of a better solution. Words aren't just meaning, but also the ways in which they can be used.

So all such examples do not prove anything about the intrinsic value or usefulness of Esperanto.

(My own main objection to it is that it doesn't sound very beautiful, Interlingua is better, and of course European Portuguese and Greek.)

And (in my opinion, but perhaps those who really know Esperanto disagree):

varmega = very hot

malvarmega = very cold

varmeta = rather hot, warmish

malvarmeta = a bit cold, coldish

fimalvarma = unpleasantly cold, f\*\*\*ing cold.

etc.

and arguably perhaps even:

warmacxja, warmetacxja = pleasantly warm, spring-like.

although -cxj is probably meant to reserved for people.

These possibilities are rarely used, because most users employ the language in ways resembling their own language. But the mechanisms exist in Esperanto, which is what makes it unique.

So there's one of the ways Esperanto differs from any human language.

Yes. That makes it nice and interesting. Don't you think? (;-0

I wonder whether Orwell modeled Doublespeak on Esperanto. I wouldn't be surprised; he had a rather jaded view of utopianists.

One objection to Esperanto is that meanings are rather sharply defined, and that as a consequence, word play isn't easy in it. I don't quite remember what Orwell's doublespeak entailed, but it seems unlikely it is anything like Esperanto.

To refresh my memory:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doublespeak>, where incidentally I also

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read;

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The word doublespeak was coined in the early 1950s. It is often incorrectly attributed to George Orwell and his 1948 dystopian novel Nineteen Eighty-Four. The word actually never appears in that novel; Orwell did, however, coin newspeak, oldspeak, and doublethink, and his novel made fashionable composite nouns with speak as the second element, which were previously unknown in English.

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One can certainly create such a language on the basis of Esperanto, but as it is, it is nothing like it, as I said, on the contrary, because Esperanto is rather direct and concrete, more so than many natural languages.

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